

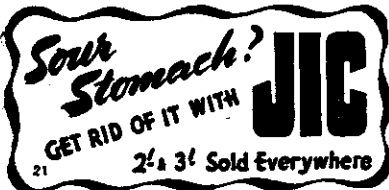
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THE LOST OBOIST

Sad Case Of G. B. Shaw

THE following letter appeared recently in the London "Times" and was reprinted in the "Pianomaker." We are able to give it to our own readers by the courtesy of Charles Begg and Co., Ltd.

Sir,—May I beg *The Times* to remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that musical instruments are among the first necessities of civilised life, and not luxuries to be made unobtainable by a Purchase Tax of 66 2-3 per cent.? To exempt wireless receiving sets, and by the same stroke cut off the supply of instruments and skilled players by which the masterpieces of music are broadcast, suggests that the Government is still in the hands of gentlemen from our public schools left to believe that anyone who can read the satires of Juvenal in their original tongue, but is unaware of the existence of the symphonies of the great masters, from Haydn and Mozart to Elgar and Sibelius, is an educated man.

The simplest orchestra which can give us the eighteenth-century symphonies needs at least 32 instruments. For a full range of nineteenth-century music, the minimum must be put at 80. And each instrument is dumb with-

out a skilled professional player, each of whom must have been provided with it by his parents in his or her teens. Now the parents of orchestral players are not luxurious millionaires. Many of them come from families living so closely within modest incomes that a sudden demand for £20 or even £10, is a very difficult matter. In my boyhood I had a chance of being qualified as an oboist; and I should have jumped at it if I could have obtained the £14 which was the price of a second-hand oboe 70 years ago. For want of that sum I was lost to the woodwind for ever, and had to adopt a profession in which the equipment was sixpenn'orth of stationery.

The notion that not only the players in the BBC and London Philharmonic Orchestra, but in the brass bands of the Salvation Army and the factory and colliery bands which competed every year at the Crystal



G. B. SHAW
Another use for his breath

Palace, the best of them being of first-rate artistic quality, are extravagant voluptuaries whose instruments may be classed with blue diamond rings and dispensed with on the smallest provocation, betrays a breath-bereaving cultural and social ignorance. I hope all the bands in London will hasten to Westminster Hall and do to the House of Commons what Joshua's trumpets did to the walls of Jericho rather than let the Appropriation Bill pass as it stands without a protest.

Faithfully

G. BERNARD SHAW.

April 23.
Ayot St. Lawrence, Welwyn, Herts.

Items From The ZB's

TUESDAY, July 21 is the anniversary of the death of Robert Burns, and ZB will broadcast, at 10 p.m., a special Burns programme which is being prepared by "Andra". An item of particular interest is a poem by Burns which, it is claimed, was recently discovered in Dunedin and which was never published. This is as it may be—authorities on Burns will doubtless laugh—but listeners will be interested in this item, as well as in two ballads by Burns which have not often been heard in New Zealand.

THE programme *Home Sweet Home* will be continued as usual at 10.45 a.m., Monday to Friday, from the ZB stations. It was thought that this programme would have to be discontinued, as the records come from Australia, and so the succeeding feature "Big Sister" was announced. Unexpectedly, however, the new episodes of *Home Sweet Home* have arrived, and so ZB listeners will still be able to follow the fortunes of Nick and Joan, Joey and Sally, and all the folk at Fairdale.

NAT GOULD's *The Dead Certainty*, which is already on the air at 12B and 22B, is to be heard on Fridays at 7.15 p.m. and Saturdays at 8.15 p.m. This serial begins at 3ZB on July 24, at 4ZB on July 31, and at 22A on August 7.

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